



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District

[www.mvp.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil)

**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Wild Rice River, Minn.

### Feasibility Study

Sept. 14, 2006

FS-32

---

#### **Project Background**

The scope of the Wild Rice River Feasibility Study is based largely on the Wild Rice Watershed District's updated watershed management plan, which was completed in May 28, 2003. That plan used the Systems Approach Planning Process, or SAPP, to define and prioritize water and related land resource problems, needs and opportunities on the Wild Rice River, with emphasis on flood damage reduction and natural resources restoration and enhancement. The SAPP was a collaborative process, involving the input of citizens, federal and state agencies and other stakeholders. The SAPP made a preliminary assessment of individual and collective corrective measures for the Wild Rice basin and employed a screening process to focus on promising candidates. The Wild Rice Feasibility study is focused on the ecosystem restoration aspects of the watershed management plan, with provision of 10-year flood protection.

The study is being conducted in two phases. Phase one was completed in July 2005 and included collecting baseline data (topographic, economic, etc.), developing and upgrading hydraulic and hydrologic models, and conducting a preliminary assessment of four potential alternatives for addressing the ecosystem restoration and flood damage reduction. Phase two was begun in November 2005 and will include conducting a more rigorous analysis of projects identified in phase one, investigating off-channel storage sites, conducting sedimentation surveys and analysis, developing detailed designs, developing an overall strategy to integrate and optimize these projects, determining the costs and economic and environmental benefits to assess project justification and preparing the necessary National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, documentation.

The Corps is partnering with the Wild Rice Watershed District to complete the study. Both agencies signed an agreement to work together on Jan. 10, 2003. The cost of the study is estimated at \$2.5 million, being shared equally between the federal government and the watershed district.

#### **Project Description**

The following measures were explored during Phase 1 to address flood damage reduction and restore the basin's ecosystem:

- A gated diversion to shunt a portion of Wild Rice River summer floodwaters to the Red River, bypassing flood prone agricultural lands.
- Setback levees along a reach of the Wild Rice River from upstream of Ada, Minn., to the mouth of the gated diversion
- Restoration of a sinuous channel and riparian corridor within the setback levees in a reach that was channelized in the 1950s.

-More-

-Continued-

- Off-channel storage in six sections of frequently flooded land near the mouth of the diversion.
- A preliminary assessment of four potential floodwater storage opportunities on the Wild Rice River main stem and key sub watersheds.

The gated diversion options were determined to be too expensive to implement as part of the federal project. Phase 2 of the feasibility study will focus on combinations of the other measures to achieve project goals.